
Multilayer retina created from embryonic stem cells

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More news from UC Irvine, this time relating to retinal diseases such as macular degeneration, retinitis pigmentosa, and Stargardt's disease. A group led by Hans Keirstead of the Reeve-Irvine Research Center and the Sue & Bill Gross Stem Cell Research Center created an 8-layer retina from human embryonic stem cells.

In a press release, Keirstead said:

“What's so exciting with our discovery is that creating transplantable retinas from stem cells could help millions of people, and we are well on the way.”

According to the release, more than 10 million Americans suffer from macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in people over 55. About 100,000 have retinitis pigmentosa, a progressive, genetic disorder that usually manifests in childhood.

Keirstead's is one of several groups of CIRM-funded researchers trying to create functional retinas for transplantation. This video describes work by Mark Humayun at the University of Southern California.

You can see beautiful images of retinal tissue created from embryonic stem cells on the CIRM Flickr photostream.

A.A.

Tags: macular degeneration, Stargardt's, retinitis pigmentosa, Keirstead

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